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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/02/2016

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SUBJECT: HCMC BUSINESSMAN PREVIEWS PRESIDENT BUSH'S VISIT

REF: TOKYO 6249 B) HANOI 2767

Classified By: Consul General Seth Winnick for reason 1.4 (b)

[¶1.](#) (C) A prominent Ho Chi Minh City businessman who accompanied Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung on his recent trip to Japan told EconOff that President Nguyen Minh Triet is keen to receive an invitation to visit the United States from President Bush when the two meet in Hanoi this month. According to Dang Thanh Tam, an HCMC-based industrialist, President Triet would like his first official visit overseas to be to the United States, preferably in the first quarter of 2007.

[¶2.](#) (C) This goal is part of a strategy on the part of the Politburo to exhibit a foreign policy "independent" of China, Tam said. PM Dung's Japan visit (reftels) and Vietnam's support for Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council are part of this strategy. PM Dung reportedly plans to wait until later in 2007 to make an official bilateral visit to China. Tam said that while PM Dung traveled to China for an ASEAN gathering, he would not conduct a separate bilateral visit there.

[¶3.](#) (C) Comment: Tam opined that Vietnam's Politburo decided that Triet and Dung should make visits to the United States and Japan a priority. During his meeting with EconOff, Tam emphasized several times President Triet's eagerness to visit the United States sooner rather than later. Such a visit would further cement U.S.-Vietnam relations in the eyes of the Vietnamese.

[¶4.](#) (C) Bio Note: Dang Thanh Tam is head of Saigon Invest Group. He owns more than ten industrial parks scattered throughout Vietnam and has recently opened a bank. He has close ties to President Triet, Communist Party Deputy General Secretary Truong Tan Sang, and HCMC Party Secretary Le Thanh Hai. His firm is one of two private companies that are official Vietnamese sponsors of the upcoming APEC CEO Summit. (Note: The other three Vietnamese sponsors of the CEO Summit are state-owned enterprises. End Note.)

WINNICK